

EPA Regions 9 and 10
West Coast Collaborative Diesel Emissions Reduction Program RFP
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 20. Do I have to use an “innovative financing mechanism” to implement my project?
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Question 1: Where do I get an RFP and where do I send the proposal?

ANSWER: The Request for Proposals (RFP) is at www.epa.gov/region10/cleandiesel.html. The RFP contains information on how to submit a proposal.

Question 2: Can an individual apply for funding under this RFP?

ANSWER: No. Only the eligible entities listed in Section III in the RFP can apply for funding under this RFP.

Question 3: How do I demonstrate that an area is economically disadvantaged?

Answer: One way to demonstrate that an area is economically disadvantaged is to cite data from the U.S. Census Bureau Web site (www.census.gov) concerning the percent of area residents living in poverty. The Area Profile tool on this Web site can provide this statistic, as can using the Bureau's Small Area Income and Poverty Estimates Web site (<http://www.census.gov/hhes/www/saie/saie.html>).

Question 4: Can an entity apply for funds to not only use biodiesel (or another cleaner fuel) in vehicles or equipment, but to actually fund the manufacturing process of biodiesel (or another cleaner fuel)? Our entity would like to incorporate a project where the fuel is manufactured by the entity.

ANSWER: No. This competition is intended to be for implementation of verified or certified diesel emissions reduction technologies, and is not intended to fund the manufacture, research, or development of those emission reduction technologies (fuel, equipment, etc.). Section II (F) of the RFP lists other funding restrictions and requirements.

Question 5: Should entities in rural areas apply, or is the competition focused on urban areas?

ANSWER: The competition is open to all eligible entities – as defined in Section III (A) of the RFP – located within Regions 9 and 10, and EPA encourages all types to apply. Please refer to the selection criteria in Section V of the RFP for additional information on how the proposals will be graded.

Question 6: Our school district contracts with a local bus company for the transportation of our students in school buses. Would we be eligible to apply for funds under this RFP and provide the funding to the bus company to retrofit the school buses?

ANSWER: Yes. EPA has funded this type of project in the past, since so many school districts contract their bus fleet. The school district would have to be the applicant, would have to

maintain the grant funds, set up the contract with the bus company, and ensure that all retrofits are properly installed and maintained on buses that would remain in the fleet for 3-5 years.

Question 7: Is a college that owns buses eligible to apply for this grant?

ANSWER: The college must first meet the eligible entity criteria in Section III (A) of the RFP. If the college falls into one of the eligible entity categories, the answer then depends on the actual project proposed. The project must meet all threshold eligibility criteria in Section III (C) of the RFP. All applicants should ensure that the project they are proposing is eligible based on these and any other requirements in the RFP.

Question 8: Are diesel particulate filters required for retrofits, or, are we allowed to install diesel oxidation catalysts as well?

ANSWER: Diesel particulate filters and/or diesel oxidation catalysts that are verified or certified technologies can be used for a project in this RFP. Please read the RFP, Section I (B)(2) for more information on diesel emissions reduction solution proposal areas.

Question 9: What is an example budget for the SF-424A?

ANSWER: The proposed budget must have budget categories that reflect those on the SF-424A. An example detailed budget is provided as Attachment A at <http://www.epa.gov/region10/cleandiesel.html>. The budget should indicate what portion of the cost will be paid by EPA, and what portion will be paid by the applicant or other partners. Leveraged funds are not included in the approved budget for the project.

Question 10: I am having trouble with the application process. When I try to register at Grants.gov, the Credential provider does not accept the funding number (posted in the subject line). Please tell me what steps I should take to apply for this opportunity.

ANSWER: If you have followed the instructions in Section IV (B)(2) of the RFP and are having trouble with the Grants.gov site, please call the special hotline for assistance with the grants.gov Web site and application process. The Grants.gov Contact Center is open Monday - Friday, 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Eastern Time: support@grants.gov or 1-800-518-4726.

Question 11: Does the project have to be accomplished within the Region 9 and 10 states?

ANSWER: Yes. See Section III (C)(1) of the RFP.

Question 12: Can a private company apply for funding under this RFP?

ANSWER: No. Only eligible entities mentioned in Section III (A) of the RFP may apply. Additionally, EPA procurement rules must be followed for any contracts, partnerships, or subawards/subgrants, as explained in Section IV (D) of the RFP.

Question 13: Is it OK if a proposal is for multiple entities in more than one state? Would EPA prefer separate proposals for each state?

ANSWER: Multiple entities within Regions 9 and 10 can apply under the same proposal, as long as there is one primary applicant. We encourage applicants to team up with other partners, per criteria #6 in Section V (Leveraging Resources). In this circumstance, it would be helpful to provide letters of support or some other form of evidence that the other entities are supporting the project. EPA does not have a stated preference for how proposals are submitted, but we have listed our selection criteria in Section V.

Question 14: Where do I find the actual form to submit the grant?

ANSWER: Please go to <http://www.grants.gov>. You will find all the forms and the process to apply for funds under this RFP. Section IV (B) of the RFP includes detailed instructions on the Grants.gov submission process.

Question 15: The RFP mentions that the funds can be used for idle reduction technologies. Can funds be used for a project to reduce idling through outreach programs (driver training, signs, etc.) and policy development? What are some examples of idle reduction technologies?

ANSWER: Projects that include efforts reduce idling through outreach programs are eligible, but please refer to Section V of the Request for Proposals for the criteria that will use to judge all proposals. For examples of idle reduction technologies eligible for funding under this announcement, please refer to Section I (B)(2)(b) of the RFP.

Question 16: Is replacing gasoline powered vehicles or equipment with new diesel powered vehicles or equipment eligible under this RFP?

ANSWER: No. Replacement of diesel vehicles and equipment with newer, cleaner diesel or hybrid or alternative fuel vehicles or equipment is eligible for funding under this announcement per Section I (B)(2)(f) of the RFP (for school buses, see Section I (B)(2)(g) of the RFP). Additional information about replacement proposals is included in a “NOTE” on page 8 of the RFP and in Section III (C)(6).

Question 17: Can funds be used for a project that is already started or will be started before the expected award date?

ANSWER: No. Any funding awarded under this announcement must be used for activities that take place within the approved project period and may not be used for unauthorized pre-award costs.

Question 18: My fleet is not large enough to enable a project that falls within the anticipated award amounts. Can I include vehicles or equipment from other fleets in my proposal?

ANSWER: Yes, but you must identify the other fleet(s) that you wish to include, and describe your relationship with such entity. In addition, you must also provide a description of vehicles/equipment belonging to the other entity that will be involved in the project. The recipient of assistance agreement funds may then contract directly with the vendor/installer of the technologies to apply those technologies for all of the vehicles/equipment described under the proposal, provided that the conditions for procurement as described in Section IV (D) are followed.

Question 19: The RFP states that award funds cannot be used to meet federal, state, or local emissions reduction mandates. What if a mandate has been passed or approved but has not yet gone into effect? Does an “anti-idling” mandate preclude the use of award funds for anti-idling technologies?

ANSWER: Mandated emissions reductions are defined by the date the mandate goes into effect, not the date the mandate is passed or approved. For proposals that include activities covered by a mandate, those activities must be completed before the mandate goes into effect, regardless of the length of the grant project period. An “anti-idling” requirement that does not require that a specific type (or types) of technology be installed or used is not considered a mandate and does not preclude use of award funds for anti-idling technologies.

Question 20: Do I have to use an “innovative financing mechanism” to implement my project?

ANSWER: No. The use of an innovative financing mechanism is optional. EPA can issue grants or cooperative agreements to fund the range of activities summarized in Section I (B)(4) of the RFP.